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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 05/02/07

- 1) Top headlines
- 2) Editorials
- 3) Prime Minister's daily schedule

Abe diplomacy:

- 4) Prime Minister Abe to press corps: "I did not apologize to the US" on the comfort-women issue, only expressed "my true feelings" for their plight
- 5) Gist of Prime Minister Abe's briefing to the accompanying press
- 6) Abe meets top dignitaries in Kuwait

Defense and security affairs:

- 7) Prime Minister Abe inspects and praises ASDF troops in Kuwait on assignment to support Iraq reconstruction
- 8) Statement from meeting of Japan, US foreign and defense cabinet members two-plus-two stresses exchange and protection of military secrets

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- 9) Large protest of citizens in Nago against "new base" and prior assessment of site for relocated runway
- 10) New Komeito head Ota concerned about selection of members of research team to study collective self-defense scenarios for the government

North Korea problem:

- 11) Department's terrorist report treatment of North Korea raises questions about whether policy priority on abduction issue has been

supplanted by nuclear issue

12) Foreign Minister Aso calls for strengthening sanctions on North Korea in stark contrast to new US conciliatory line

13) ROK foreign minister in meeting with in Seoul with Koichi Kato and other LDP lawmakers raises doubts about Japan's placing high priority on abduction issue

14) Japan objects to WTO director general's new agricultural proposal

15) Poll of constitutional reform: 78% of public want Article 9 to "contribute to peace"; 58% want constitution revised; and 18% want SDF mentioned as "armed force"

Articles:

1) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

Poll: 78% say Article 9 has contributed to maintenance of peace

Mainichi, Yomiuri & Sankei

Japan, US agree to jointly protect military secrecy

Nihon Keizai:

Japan, China agree to resolve dual taxation in two cases involving Japanese firms operating in China

Tokyo Shimbun:

Japan Green Resources Agency collected membership fees according to amounts of orders received

Akahata:

78th May Day: Rallies held in 369 places

TOKYO 00001957 002 OF 010

2) EDITORIALS

Asahi:

(1) Values brought by Constitution should not be removed but developed

Mainichi:

(1) Provide Japanese left behind in China with generous assistance for their hardships

(2) Stop unpaid overtime

Yomiuri:

(1) Pension bill: Revamp measures for pension-plan unification, part-timers

(2) More competition needed for electricity industry

Nihon Keizai:

(1) Make use of M&As: Society and companies should share merits

Sankei:

(1) M&A age: Changes in consciousness necessary

(2) Japan High School Baseball Federation: New system should be established

Tokyo Shimbun:

Constitution should not be used as tool for administration

Akahata:

Revision of Juvenile Law for the worse: Harsh punishment prevents children from getting back on track

3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 30 & May 1

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)

May 2, 2007

April 30

Evening

Met with Kuwaiti Prime Minister Nasser at the Bayan Palace. Later joined by Japan Business Federation Chairman Mitarai and other business leaders. Attended banquet hosted by Nasser. Stayed at the Bayan Palace.

May 1

Morning

Visited Ali Al Salem Air Base to encourage ASDF personnel carrying out airlift mission. Left Kuwaiti International Airport on government plane. Arrived at Doha International Airport in Qatar. Attended welcoming ceremony. Met in Doha City with Qatar Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassem .

Noon

Met with Qatar Emir Hamad bin Khalifa. Luncheon hosted by the emir.

Afternoon

Gave speech at luncheon hosted by the economic mission at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Informal meeting with reporters at Four Seasons

TOKYO 00001957 003 OF 010

Hotel. Responded to interview by Qatar-based Arabic satellite television station Al-Jazeera.

Evening

Attended dinner party with the economic mission at Four Seasons Hotel.

4) Prime Minister Abe: "I did not apologize to the US" on comfort-women issue

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)

May 2, 2007

Doha, Makoto Nakayama

Asked on May 1 by reporters accompanying him about such statements in his recent summit meeting with US President George W. Bush as, "I feel sorry (mooshi wake nai) for those who were comfort women," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe responded: "I did not at all apologize to the United States."

The South Korean media has criticized Abe's remark, with such comments, "He picked the wrong person to apologize to." Abe explained his remarks: "Since my feelings toward the comfort women had been incorrectly conveyed, I plainly expressed my feelings."

5) Outline of statements by Prime Minister Abe

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)

May 2, 2007

The following is the outline of statements Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made to reporters accompanying him on his visit to Doha.

Prospects for the second half of the Diet session: I will basically leave the Diet Policy Committee to work out which bills should be given priority. I, on my part, want to see efforts made for passage of all key bills. I would like to attach importance to passage of three education-related bills, as I said that I want to make the current Diet session an education-revitalization Diet. I think the public has a strong desire to see the public servant system reformed. In my view, the bottom line is how to respond to this voice of the public.

Politics and money: I believe concrete matters, such as attaching receipts to financial reports, are being discussed in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the New Komeito. My basic policy is that government cannot be administered without the people's trust. I have indicated my policy that discussions be pursued with reform of the Political Funds Control Law in mind from the perspective of settling the office expenses issue and the way political funds should be. If

my judgment is needed at the last stage of the discussions, I will do so as the president of the LDP.

Upper House election: Some LDP members are discussing how I should take responsibility if the party loses the election. It is not constructive to discuss such a matter before the election. We should discuss how we can win the election. I am aware that single-seat constituencies are extremely important in strategic terms. However, I, as the president of the LDP, want to win in all constituencies by vigorously making the case for our party's policy. I will explain our party's policy in a resolute, honest manner and implement it. I

TOKYO 00001957 004 OF 010

want the people to judge my policy in that course. We are no longer in an age of setting policies for the sake of specific supporters. Regarding the possibility of concurrent elections for the Upper and Lower Houses, I am not thinking of dissolving the Lower House at all for the time being.

Comfort women issue: Since I thought my view was conveyed incorrectly, I explained my stance in the US. I believe congressional leaders understood me. I did not offer an apology to the US.

6) Prime Minister Abe, Kuwaiti emir agree on bilateral cooperation toward stability in Iraq

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
Evening, May 1, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met on the evening of April 30 (early morning of May 1, Japan time) in Kuwait City separately with Kuwaiti Emir Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah and Prime Minister Nasser al-Mohammed al-Ahmed al-Sabah. Abe and the Kuwaiti leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation between their countries toward Iraq's stability. Abe is the first Japanese prime minister to visit Kuwait.

Abe expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti emir for the country's support for Japan's Air Self-Defense Force unit deployed in Kuwait for airlift operations for the reconstruction of Iraq, saying, "Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community for the reconstruction of Iraq. I hope for your continued cooperation." The emir replied: "We want to extend the utmost cooperation." Regarding bilateral cooperation on the environment, including cooperation to purify the bay of Kuwait, Abe stated that Japan would actively cooperate with Kuwait by taking advantage of Japan's technology and know-how.

After the series of meetings, the governments of Japan and Kuwait released a joint statement stipulating that (1) the two countries will set up a joint panel to discuss the promotion of cooperation in the economic and commerce areas, and (2) Kuwait will ensure a stable oil supply to Japan.

Abe is expected to make an inspection of the Air Self-Defense unit deployed to Kuwait and encourage the ASDF members.

7) Prime minister meets with ASDF troops in Kuwait

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
May 2, 2007

Hiroaki Matsunaga, Kuwait

Prime Minister Abe visited on the morning of May 1, local time, members of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) stationed at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait for an air force mission supporting US-led operations in Iraq. Since Japanese troops joined the operations in March 2004, this was the first time for a Japanese prime minister to visit them. The prime minister also visited Maritime Self-Defense Force troops in the United Arab Emirates on April 29. Abe apparently aimed to demonstrate to Japanese and foreign audiences Japan's contributions to the stability of the Middle East and the rest of the world through SDF activities.

Before about 100 ASDF personnel, the prime minister stressed:

"I have received numerous messages of appreciation from the United Nations, the United States, and Iraqi people. Keeping in your heart that you are the ones who will turn the Iraqi reconstruction work into a glorious chapter in the history of Japan, I expect you will continue to devote yourselves to the mission."

Abe insisted on a visit to ASDF troops in Kuwait during the tour of the Middle East, despite a tight schedule.

The Iraq Reconstruction Assistance Special Measures Law, which supports ASDF operations for Iraq, is to expire at the end of July. The government is stepping up efforts to enact a bill amending the law at the current Diet session to extend the ASDF mission for another two years. Given this, it is significant, as an aide to the prime minister said, "for the command-in-chief of Japan to meet and encourage the troops and underscore to the people the importance of their continued mission".

The prime minister also seems to have a desire to increase Japan's influence in the Middle East region, which is the main source of energy supply for Japan, by offering both financial and personnel contributions in a proactive way.

The prime minister explained Japan's Iraq reconstruction assistance measures, including the dispatch of SDF troops, during a series of summit meetings with leaders of Gulf nations in the Middle East. Their high evaluations and appreciation toward Japan's contributions were expressed in their joint statements.

8) Japan, US to conclude info security pact

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
May 2, 2007

WASHINGTON—Japan and the United States held a two-plus-two foreign and defense ministerial meeting of their intergovernmental security consultative committee on the afternoon of May 1 (early on May 2, Japan time) at the US Department of State. In response to North Korea's nuclear test in October last year, the Japanese and US governments confirmed the efficacy of US nuclear deterrence in the Far East region. The two governments agreed to push for integrated ballistic missile defense (BMD) and conclude a general security of military information agreement (GSOMIA) as a prerequisite for the two countries to share intelligence.

The agreement at the two-plus-two meeting this time will spur bilateral intelligence integration. In addition, it is also likely to accelerate discussions in the Japanese government and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party for legislation intended to strengthen information management.

The two-plus-two ministerial meeting was held with the participation of Foreign Minister Aso and Defense Minister Kyuma from Japan and Secretary of State Rice and Secretary of Defense Gates on the US

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side. After the meeting, the two governments will release a joint statement titled "Alliance transformation."

The joint statement stresses the need for Japan and the United States to expand their bilateral intelligence cooperation and

TOKYO 00001957 006 OF 010

intelligence sharing in order to deal effectively with newly emerging security challenges. The joint document confirms that Japan and the United States will create a system that will enable the Self-Defense Forces and US forces to share their respective radar information at all times for missile defense. The two countries agreed to formulate a roadmap to share intelligence.

In the meantime, the joint document says Japan and the United States will consolidate an information security mechanism in order to push ahead with such intelligence sharing, and the two countries agreed to conclude a GSOMIA. This is aimed at strengthening information management.

The SDF has introduced the Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3), a ground-to-air guided missile system, to some of its bases in Japan for BMD. In this connection, Japan and the United States agreed to shield Japan in its entirety with its frontloaded deployment of PAC-3 batteries across the nation by the beginning of 2010, more than one year earlier than initially scheduled. The Maritime Self-Defense Force will also immediately renovate its four Aegis-equipped vessels to load them with the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3), a sea-based intercept missile system.

In addition, the joint document also refers to China, which has stepped up its defense spending with an annual increase of more than 10%, and it calls for military transparency. It underscores partnerships with India and Australia.

9) 1,000 citizens rally against prelim survey, encircle Camp Schwab against new base

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 25) (Full)
April 29, 2007

NAGO-"We are against the new coastal plan!" "Stop the preliminary survey that violates the Environmental Assessment Law!" With these outcries, local residents and others yesterday gathered in front of Camp Schwab, a US military base at Henoko in Nago City, Okinawa Prefecture, calling for alleviating their base-hosting burden, and swearing to block the government's plan to build an alternative facility there for the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in the prefecture. Way back in 1952, the Japan-US Security Treaty came into effect under the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Okinawa was then separated from Japan and has been compelled to shoulder the burden of bases over the past 55 years.

The rally was sponsored by a local group against the planned construction of an alternative heliport for Futenma airfield (in a coastal area of Camp Schwab). It mobilized a total of about 1,000 participants, including local civic groups and citizens from within and outside Okinawa Prefecture.

In the pouring rain, those rally participants encircled Camp Schwab and cried out to the base. They tied up ribbons to the base's wire netting with messages, with some of them reading "no more new bases" and "peace but weapons." The rally resolved to struggle against the new base.

On April 24, the Defense Facilities Administration Agency's Naha bureau began its contracted divers' work of installing equipment for a preliminary survey in waters off Henoko to probe the sea in the run-up to the planned construction of an alternative facility for

TOKYO 00001957 007 OF 010

Futenma airfield. "The government is going to construct the new base," says Eiko Ginoza, 59, of Uruma City, who participated in a demonstration at sea against the work. "There's no choice but to lay my life on the line to stop it," she added.

The DFAA bureau has already completed its work of checking where to install equipment for a preliminary survey. It is expected to set up equipment there after the Golden Week holidays. The equipment includes video cameras and passive sonar to grasp the ecology of dugongs and sea turtles. In addition, the DFAA also plans to set up materials for corals and the like to implant eggs.

10) New Komeito leader Ota concerned about selection of members for panel to study the right of collective defense

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
May 2, 2007

In the recording of CS Broadcasting program yesterday, New Komeito

Chief Representative Akihiro Ota expressed his concern about the members of panels of experts, which will study individual cases for the use of the right to collective self-defense. He stated:

"The members include those who are favor of Japan going nuclear and those who call for having two non-nuclear principles instead of the three non-nuclear principles. Most of the members tend to be on the right."

Ota also stressed: "The interpretation of the Constitution that does not allow Japan to use the right to collective self-defense must not be changed."

11) US terrorist report: US pressured to make a decision: Will priority go to Japan-US alliance or to scrapping North Korea's nuclear program?

YOMIURI (Page 6) (Excerpt)
May 2, 2007

Takashi Sakamoto in Washington

The US Department of State issued on April 30 its annual country-based report on terrorism for 2006. In it, the description of the issue of abductions by North Korea has been simplified, compared to the previous year. In that lies the intentions of the US government, which while supporting Japan's position on the abductions, is moving ahead with talks to remove North Korea from the list of terrorist-supporting states, as well as linking such to success in the six-party talks. According to a report from the Congressional Research Service that this newspaper has obtained, the US is being pressured to make a decision as to whether to give priority to its alliance relationship with Japan or to the process of getting North Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons program.

12) Foreign Minister raises question about US reconciliation policy to North Korea, calling for strengthening sanctions

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
May 2, 2007

Japan and the US during a foreign ministerial meeting yesterday (Japan time) reached an agreement that pressure on North Korea

TOKYO 00001957 008 OF 010

should be strengthened if it fails to implement preliminary measures to shut down its nuclear facilities at an early date. Both countries have thus checked Pyongyang in unison. Following the agreement, Foreign Minister Taro Aso told reporters, "This is unless North Korea makes a response within several days." However, it is inconceivable for the situation to move within several days. The predominant view in government circles is that all sanctions cards have been used. Some see that Aso's statement, which has set a deadline, is a message to the US Department of State, which is leaning toward a reconciliation line in dealing with Pyongyang.

Following the launches of ballistic missiles last July and the nuclear test last October by North Korea, the government has independently implemented sanctions, including: (1) a ban on imports of all items from North Korea; (2) total ban on port calls by North Korean vessels; and (3) a ban in principle on entry into Japan by North Korean nationals. Japan has also frozen bank accounts of North Korea's missile-related companies (15 organizations and one individual) through international cooperation. As further sanctions, placing a total ban on exports and a ban on ethnic Koreans from reentering Japan has been suggested. However, neither proposal is being considered as a realistic option, as a senior Cabinet Secretariat noted, "Placing such bans will bring about a state of

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war." The United Nations is also drafting a list of nuclear development-related financial sanctions, based on its sanctions resolution. However, the effort is encountering complications.

The Japanese government tackled the Japan-US foreign ministerial meeting, based on the position that it is important for Japan and

the US to adopt a pressure policy. The concurrence of opinions was an achievement to a certain degree.

However, it appeared that MOFA had not expected that Aso would set such a deadline. An aid traveling with him simply said, "As the minister said, if he did say so." Aso during the meeting touched on the US president's statement calling for strengthening pressure on North Korea and said, "I regard the president's statement as very important." It appeared that he thought it important to drive the point home to Secretary Condoleezza Rice.

13) South Korean foreign minister in meeting with LDP's Kato raises doubts about Japan's policy of placing priority on abduction issue

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
May 2, 2007

Seoul, Lisa Kato

Koichi Kato, former secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and Taku Yamasaki, former deputy prime minister, held separate meetings yesterday in Seoul with South Korea Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Song Min Soon and Unification Minister Lee Jae Joung. Song cast doubt upon Japan's policy of placing priority on the abduction issue. He stated:

"Japan has said that there will be no resolution on the North Korean issue unless the abduction is resolved. But that will not bring a resolution to the North Korean problem. South Korea also has the issue of abductions, but we have continued talks with North Korea, believing that the issue will be resolved inevitably."

The unification minister, referring to the so-called "comfort women"

TOKYO 00001957 009 OF 010

issue, expressed unhappiness with moves by LDP lawmakers calling for a review of the 1993 Kono statement. He stated:

"It is important for the former comfort women to restore their honor as women and human beings. Resolving the issue will lead to the restoration of Japan's honor. Japan is responsible for coming to terms with the past and then moving ahead into the future."

14) WTO agricultural talks: Japan opposes chairman's proposal for reducing key items; Focus will be responses of member nations

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)
May 2, 2007

The paper that Chairman Falconer of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations circulated at the multilateral trade talks on April 30 included proposals harsh to Japan. It noted that the prevailing view is in favor of narrowing down key items on which high tariffs can be maintained to 1% -5% of all farm products. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) Minister Toshikatsu Matsuoka opposed the proposal, saying, "It is unacceptable." The chairman's paper also included views severe to other leading countries. As such, whether the paper will become a basis for future negotiations will depend on how various countries will respond to it.

Japan had insisted that more than 10% of all trade items should be allowed as key items. It has 1,326 detailed trade items. There are 17 rice-related items, to which it gives top priority, 20 flour-related items, 47 dairy products and 56 sugar-related items, topping 10% of all trade items. If the number of key items is cut to 5% of all trade items, this number will be reduced to 66, ousting many items from the list.

The paper Falconer compiled last June set that the number of key items be 1% -15% of all trade items. The proposal this year appears to reflect that the EU has accepted the 4% -5% proposal instead of the previous 8% proposal, making concessions to the US during backroom negotiations since the beginning of the year and. MAFF is wary of Japan becoming isolated over key trade items. It intends to make a counterproposal to the chairman's document.

The paper also seeks concessions on domestic subsidies by the US, tariff cuts by the EU and special items set by developing countries. Discussions on the paper will be held in Geneva next week or after. The outlook is that it will be difficult for member countries to accept the paper.

15) Poll on Constitution: 78% think Article 9 contributes to peace

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)
May 2, 2007

The Constitution of Japan turns 60 tomorrow. In a recent telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey conducted by the Asahi Shimbun, a total of 78% answered that Article 9 in the Constitution has contributed to Japan's peace. Meanwhile, a total of 58% answered that they thought it would be necessary to amend the Constitution. Asked why, however, 80% of them said it would be necessary to incorporate new interests and systems in the Constitution. Respondents were also asked if the Self-Defense Forces should be changed in status to a military force for self-defense. In

TOKYO 00001957 010 OF 010

response to this question, "yes" accounted for only 18%. This shows a gap between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's stance of revising the Constitution and public opinion. Respondents were further asked whether they would like the Constitution to be amended under the Abe government. In response, public opinion was split, with 40% saying "yes" and 42% saying "no."

The survey was conducted over a period of two days, April 14-15, concurrently with a monthly survey on the Abe cabinet.

In 2005, the LDP drafted a new constitution, revising Article 9 for Japan to have armed forces for self-defense. Prime Minister Abe is aiming to amend the Constitution while he is in office, and he is poised to make constitutional revision the issue of this July's election for the House of Councillors.

In the survey, respondents were asked if they thought the Constitution should be amended. In response to this question, 58% answered "yes," with 27% saying no. They were further asked if they thought it would be better to revise Article 9. In response, 33% answered "yes," with 49% saying "no." In addition, 56% said "yes" when asked if the SDF's existence should be described in the Constitution. However, "yes" came from only 18% when asked if the SDF should be changed to a military force for self-defense, with a total of 70% preferring to keep the SDF in its current status. Even among those who think it better to revise Article 9, 52% said it would be better to keep the SDF in its current status.

In a previous face-to-face survey conducted in April last year, "yes" came from 55% when asked if the Constitution should be amended. In an earlier face-to-face survey in April 2005, "yes" accounted for 56%. In the survey taken in April last year, a total of 74% answered "yes" when asked if they thought Article 9 has been helpful for Japan's peace. As seen from these figures, public opinion has been inclining toward constitutional revision while appreciating Article 9.

In the latest survey, those who answered "yes" when asked if they thought the Constitution should be amended were further asked to pick one of three given reasons. In response to this question, 84% of them noted the need to incorporate new interests and systems, with 7% saying they would like to create a new constitution and 6% saying Article 9 is problematic. As is evident from these figures, there is an apparent gap between the LDP's advocacy of constitutional revision and the general public's awareness.

Among those who answered "no" when asked if they thought the Constitution should be amended, 39% said that was because Article 9 might be revised. This reason topped all other reasons. Among other answers, 33% answered that the Constitution has now taken root in the nation, with 25% saying it guarantees freedom and rights. In contrast to those who think it necessary to amend the Constitution, many of those negative about revising the Constitution were

conscious of Article 9.

DONOVAN